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Inside Information

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PURDUE UNIVERSITY SEARCHES FOR INFO HEAD

Purdue University's School of Agriculture is taking applications for head of its Department of Agricultural Information.

The position will be available Nov. 1, 1981. Deadline for applications is June 15.

Qualifications require at least a Master's degree in mass communications, education, journalism or other related area.

Applicants must have demonstrated capability in communications, media and audio-visual techniques and have conducted effective communications programs--preferably for educational institutions.

Those applying must have demonstrated ability to recruit staff, supervise work of others, communicate with colleagues and manage departmental budgets.

Training or background in agriculture and extension education is helpful.

The incumbent is responsible to the Dean of Agriculture and directors of the Cooperative Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station and Resident Instruction for overall information and communications activities relating to programs in agriculture, home economics, veterinary medicine and international programs.

The department handles editing, publishing and distribution of publications; news, information and feature releases; and radio and television programming.

In addition to heading the Department of Agricultural Information (about 70% of time), the person also heads the Audio-Visual Production Department (other 30% of time).

The incumbent is responsible to the director of the Cooperative Extension Service for providing audio-visual production services to all departments and administrative units on the Purdue University campus.

Anyone wishing to apply should send an application and resume to: Dean B. J. Liska, Chairman, Search Committee, Ag Administration Building, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907 by June 15.

Nominations are also invited.

SEA LAUNCHES "COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS MAIL"

USDA's Science & Education Administration has inaugurated its new electronic "cooperative systems mail network" between Washington, D.C., and cooperating land-grant universities.

The computerized, rapid person-to-person communication network is available to SEA-Cooperative Research, SEA-Extension, State Cooperative Extension Services, and State Agricultural Research Stations federally funded through SEA cooperative research.

State Extension and Research directors and 1890 institution administrators may make the network available to members of their staffs at their discretion.

The "cooperative systems mail" gives users of the network the ability to receive and send mail instantly, but handle messages at one's convenience.

The system is intended to increase interruption-free periods and reduce paper files.

It will distribute messages in seconds, and it will archive messages for easy retrieval.

Messages delivered to the user's electronic "mailbox" can be accessed anywhere there is a telephone and a terminal.

Portable terminals are available which are no heavier than a brief case.

"Cooperative systems mail" is accessible seven days a week, 24 hours a day, providing a constantly available forum for the exchange of information, progress reports and results data--without disrupting day-to-day operations even when time frames are short.

The network is operated with plain English instructions which practically explain themselves.

Writing of messages is done in normal fashion. Writer uses own words, own style. Anything from a one-line reminder to a multi-page letter can go.

Messages are delivered to the addressee's electronic "mailbox" to be printed out when it is convenient.

A message can be sent to one addressee or many, even to mailing lists.

(continued on next page)

Sender can designate "cc" recipient, priorities ("express mail"), reply requested and acknowledgment of receipt.

Receiver can read the mail at any convenient time--all of it or selected messages after "scanning" the mail.

Messages can be immediately answered, some with a single command, and messages can be forwarded to another receiver with another simple command.

The writer can easily make revisions and additions while writing. One can back-up, revise, correct mistakes, delete or add until everything is as it is desired.

For those who are not so sure of their spelling, a quick request to the computer will tell the writer if there are any misspelled words in the message.

Each user can set up own set of electronic files to store incoming or outgoing messages as long as needed.

Files then can be searched by date, sender, addressee or subject.

Other commands provide powerful but flexible capabilities for a complete electronic mail system, including computer conferencing, posting items on an electronic "bulletin board," even interfacing with available word processing equipment.

The SEA "cooperative systems mail" is using the same computer system currently being tested by USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs and information divisions of two other USDA agencies.

All news releases issued by the USDA News Center are electronically sent via the system to all five regional information offices administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

Headquarters information staffs of AMS and USDA's Food Safety & Quality Service exchange messages with the five regional offices through the same system.

GPA and SEA are discussing plans to make available all USDA national news releases through SEA's cooperative system.

Next step after that would be for the five regional information offices to make their regional news releases available to land-grant universities within their respective regions which are on the system.

Those interested in more details about the SEA electronic mail system should contact Jerry Paulson, Technical Assistant to the Chief, Information Systems Division, Science & Education Administration, 5th Floor, National Agricultural Library Building, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Or call (301) 474-9020.

Two communicators with USDA's Science & Education Administration were recognized at the agency's second annual awards ceremony recently.

Alice Skelsey, head of the agency's information staff, received the SEA "Director's Award."

The award was presented to Skelsey for her "unusual creativity in organizing an information program and staff to help carry out the concept of a unified science and education function."

Ovid Bay, former Extension Service information head, also received the SEA "Director's Award."

Bay was recognized for his "outstanding efforts in behalf of extension and other federal agency small farm programs, utilizing his skills as a communicator to advance small farm program goals."

CANADIAN FACT SHEETS INCREASING

According to public information officers with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, their office is increasing subject matter offerings to the public through fact sheets.

The Canadian officials believe that fact sheets can widen the subject matter coverage at less cost--in time and money--than through other more extensive publications.

The Canadians are now using color photographs in the fact sheets to illustrate insects and diseases.

The Canadian fact sheet series is primarily directed at farmers and gardeners, but has been broadened to include consumers.

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